

## Other Considerations

- If you arrive at home and suspect a that a stranger may be inside, **DO NOT GO IN**. Leave quietly and go to a neighbor's to call 911 to report the crime.
- Be cautious of those going door-to-door collecting for charities. Ask to see an ID that identifies them with that charity. Never give cash. Please report suspicious people. If your gut tells you "something is not right," it probably isn't. Call 911 or your local police non-emergency number to report the incident.
- Be wary of unsolicited offers to make repairs to your home. Deal only with reputable businesses.
- If you have been swindled or conned, report the crime to the police. Con artists count on their victim's reluctance to admit they've been duped, but if you delay, you help them get away. Remember, if you never report the crime, they are free to cheat others again and again and you have no chance of ever getting your money back.
- Never withdraw money from your bank accounts for anyone except **YOURSELF**. Be wary of con artists and get-rich schemes that probably are too good to be true.
- If you are attacked on the street, make as much noise as possible by calling for help or blowing a whistle. Do not pursue your attacker. *Call 911 and report the crime as soon as possible.*
- If you are the victim of a robbery, **DO NOT STRUGGLE** with the robber. You increase your chances of injury. Get a good look at the suspect, get the best description you can, get away from the person as quickly as possible, and call 911 as soon as possible. Remember: you are more important than your stuff. You can always get more stuff: you can't get another you.

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## Crime Prevention Tips for Seniors

### General

Over 90% of Americans will be exposed to - or a survivor of - a violent crime. Crime prevention is everyone's responsibility, not just a job for law enforcement. Seniors can learn how to protect themselves from crime by following these simple, common sense suggestions. Planning, preparation and awareness will make it less likely that you will be a violent crime victim. Share these tips with your neighbors and friends, too, and make it tough for criminals to work in your neighborhood.

### Taking the Bus or Other Public Transportation

- Keep bus schedules of frequently traveled routes and plan ahead to minimize waiting time.
- Choose the "safest" bus stop you can. Usually the best choice is a stop on a main street that is well lit with lots of traffic and people around.
- Be very aware when waiting for and/or exiting a bus. Many strong-arm robberies occur as a person waits at a bus shelter or soon after he/she exits a bus.
- If there is a shelter at your bus stop, use it but do not huddle in the back or corner. Panhandlers, troublemakers and criminals are attracted to someone who does not have an easy exit.
- Sit near the front of the bus. If you are close to the driver, you are less likely to be harassed. Do not be reluctant or embarrassed to ask a younger, able-bodied passenger to give up their seat.
- If someone does bother or frighten you with their behavior, move to another seat as soon as you can. If it continues let the driver and other passengers know.
- If you use the bus regularly, consider a transit pass or pre-purchased bus tickets to eliminate fumbling for cash.

## **Safety At Home**

- Never open your door automatically. Use an optical viewer. Install a peephole in your front door so you can see callers without opening the door.
- If you are home and someone comes to your door, answer the door. That does not mean “open” the door. Always know who’s on the other side of the door before you open it, even if you are expecting someone. The vast majority of burglaries occur when the resident is away from home. The majority of burglars do not want to confront anyone in the home. By sending the message that someone is home, by answering your door, you may well deter the burglar.
- Ask for proper identification from deliverymen or strangers. Don't be afraid to ask if they are legitimate. If they are, they won't mind.
- Lock your doors and windows. In a great number of the burglaries involving seniors, the doors and/or windows were opened/unlocked. Keep your garage doors locked. Install dead bolt locks on all your exterior doors.
- If a stranger asks to use your telephone, offer to place the call for him/her yourself. Never let a stranger into your home.
- Do not leave notes on your door when you are gone, and do not hide your keys under the mat or in other conspicuous places.
- Never give out information over the phone or on your answering machine/voicemail indicating you are alone or that you won't be home at a certain time.
- Keep your home well lit at night, both inside and out, and keep your curtains closed at night.
- When you are gone for more than a day, make sure your home looks and sounds occupied - use an automatic timer to turn on lights and a radio or TV.
- Notify trusted neighbors when going away on a trip. Arrange for your mail or newspapers to be held. Arrange for someone to mow the lawn if need be.
- Use "Block Watch" to keep an eye on your neighborhood. A concerned neighbor is often the best protection against crime because suspicious persons and activities are noticed and reported to police promptly.

## **Safety In Public Places and While You Are Out**

- Before you leave home, decide what you actually need to take with you rather than automatically taking your entire handbag or wallet out of habit. For example, if you are going to the grocery store for a few items, you can carry cash, a single check, or credit/debit card, I.D. and keys in a pocket.
- Wear clothing and shoes that are comfortable, low profile and appropriate for the weather. This may not be the most fashionable choice, but it is the safest.
- Always plan your route and stay alert to your surroundings. Avoid shortcuts. Walk confidently. Scan your surroundings and make eye contact with people.
- If you must carry valuables like important papers, jewelry, cash etc., choose to wear clothes with inside pockets or use a small bag with a long thin strap to be worn under your coat or clothes.
- Never carry a wallet in back pocket of pants or jacket or sweater pocket. All cash should be carried in front pockets of pants.
- Carry your keys and ID separately. If someone gets your keys and ID, they may go to your home or business and access that location with the keys.
- If you must make a large, cash purchase, plan ahead and take a companion along. There really is safety in numbers. If you do not drive or cannot get a ride, use a taxi rather than a bus to minimize waiting time.
- If you use bank machines (ATM's) choose one located in a well-lit, busy spot like inside a grocery store. Put your card and cash away before leaving the machine. Do not carry your Personal ID number (PIN) with you ATM card.
- Don't display large sums of cash and don't carry any more cash than necessary. Most stores accept checks, check cards and debit cards, thereby reducing your need to carry large amounts of cash. When you shop.
- Carry your purse very close to you preferable with the strap over your shoulder and the purse to the front of your body. Don't dangle it from your arm.
- Avoid carrying weapons - they could be used against you.
- Have your paychecks or government checks sent directly to your bank account. Many banks have senior citizen's discounts.